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which brought a particular unit into the fight compelled it also to retire when its allied clan made peace.

The fighting lasted only a few days, but many men were killed, the old men say, and much grain and live-stock destroyed. The Namoos suffered badly. So the following year, at the usual time for fighting, just before the commencement of the sowing season, while the granaries were still full, the then Chief of Tongo 'set up arrows (*sa peema*)'[1] again to revenge their defeat. Thus the 'debt was cancelled (*samər lerigya*)'.

In these wars the major cleavage of Tale society came into operation in its most acute form, and they give us a particularly clear insight into its meaning. The major cleavage between Namoos and non-Namoos is not an insuperable barrier like that which separates castes or races in some societies. It should rather be regarded as the coping-stone of the whole complex system of differentiation and integration of corporate units in Tale society by means of the structural ties and cleavages inherent in it.

Wars, among the Tallensi, were not acts of political policy, as we understand it. They were not fought for the sake of acquiring territory, of extending the authority of one group over another, of taking captives, or of pillage. Indeed pillage to enrich oneself was strictly tabooed. Tale wars were not even calculated acts of aggression. They usually arose out of impulsive acts of retaliation by individuals or small groups of clan brothers for attacks, as often as not unpremeditated, on their kin, their property, or their self-regard. If the parties involved in the quarrel belonged to clans on opposite sides of the major cleavage, the whole system of clanship and ritual ties might be swung into activity and the result would be a general war. It could not be otherwise, given the native system of genealogical relationships and the sentiments connected therewith.

The structure of Tale society as a dynamically integrated social region is incompatible with warfare directed towards political or economic domination. One consequence of their segmentary social structure was that they had no regular military organization. In war all the able-bodied men turned out carrying their bows and quivers of poisoned arrows, their adzes, and other weapons, and hung around with medicines, exactly as they do to-day to go hunting. All the fighting men of a clan, the men of each major segment forming a separate contingent, went out in a mob to meet the enemy at the outskirts of the settlement. Their women folk, many of whom were daughters of the enemy clans, carried water to them, dragged away casualties, and urged on the fighters with their shrill, trilling *kpɛləmət* cries. The fighting consisted of uncoordinated sorties and skirmishes by individuals or small parties, without fixed leadership and with no other purpose than to rout the enemy and thus reassert the flouted rights or restore the injured pride of the victors. Their principal weapon, a bow strung with a slither of bamboo firing an unfeathered poisoned arrow, made it necessary for a man to get within about 50 yards

[1] A clan-head could initiate a just war of revenge, with the consent of all the clan elders, and after consulting a diviner, in theory without incurring mystical blood-guilt. And yet, in after years, misfortunes falling on his descendants might be ascribed to this act.

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of an enemy in order to hit him. Fighting went on all day in spasms. At nightfall the men retired to their settlements to feast, dance, sing boastful songs, lament the dead, and rest. This was kept up for two or three days at most and then peace was made.[1]

Tale warfare inevitably took this form, since no single segment of the society and neither of the two major groups of clans had political power superior to any other segment or the other group. There is no institutional framework that could be extended so as to make any one segment paramount over the others as a result of a successful war. Every segment holds its allotted place in the whole system in virtue of complementary politico-ritual ties with the other segments, in particular with segments that would be opposed to it in war. They have common values and are subject to common ritual sanctions. Besides, their marriage rules and kinship system spread a wide network of affinal and cognatic relations between clans and lineages. Every Talən has cognatic or affinal kin in every clan within a radius of four or five miles of his own. Though corporate loyalties to his lineage and clan override his private loyalties to his kinsfolk of other clans, whenever the corporate interests of his unit are at stake, they do not extinguish them. Hence a man had to be very careful, in a fight, to avoid killing or injuring any of his own kinsmen who might be on the other side. Hence, also, the prohibition of pillage for one's own advantage. If the enemy was routed, the victors might descend on their settlement, set fire to the homesteads, burn the stored grain, slaughter and eat the live-stock; they could not carry off any of the enemy's possessions. A Namoo clan might fight a Talis clan; but it would be a grave sin against kinship morality for an individual Namoo to plunder or to take captive individual Talis, since they would most likely be the cognates or affines of members of his own clan and therefore indirectly of himself. The idea of killing the women folk or children of the enemy clan—who might easily be one's clan sisters or nephews—would have seemed monstrous.

Last, but not least, Tale economic organization is incompatible with warfare for material gain. There was and is no such thing as a tribe-wide or clan economy. Occupational differentiation, other than the division of labour between the sexes and in accordance with age, has barely emerged. Local trade is becoming increasingly important, but there was in the past no commerce other than barter and occasional petty trade. The Tallensi were and are still sedentary cultivators, using a primitive

[1] Tallensi often say that many men were killed and wounded in these fights. As they never counted their casualties it is impossible to get accurate figures from them. But taking account of the weapons used, the manner of fighting, and the duration of the fights, it is difficult to believe that casualties were in fact very heavy. As far as I can estimate, no more than three to four thousand men, fighting in scattered contingents of about 20 to 50 men, would be engaged in a general war. A settlement like Tongo, the largest in Taleland, would turn out between 200 and 300 fighting men at the outside. Putting together all that I was told, I would say that three or four men killed and a dozen wounded would have been regarded as a very heavy casualty list for Tongo in a day's fighting. It must be remembered, though, that the mortality from wounds was probably high, as the main non-magical treatment used was to suck the poison and pus out of the wound.